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***Everyday Nationalism: Representations of the Falkland
Islands/Malvinas Conflict in the United Kingdom and Argentina***



Hagar Sivan

*International Affairs Senior Capstone
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ABSTRACT

National identity is malleable; it is shaped by events such as conflicts, disasters, and achievements. The following research paper details a study conducted to assess the influence of the Falkland Islands/ Malvinas War of 1982 on national identity among youth in Argentina and the United Kingdom. Differences between the representations of the conflict in the two countries were discovered through interviews with British citizens and Argentines. The experiences of those individuals, were used to discover the factors that led the war to play a big role in Argentine society and the reasoning behind the lack of mention of the war in contemporary British society. This research suggests that factors such as changes in regime, support of troops from the home front during the conflict, and large differences between socio-economic classes led to the reproduction of representations of the Falklands/ Malvinas islands and war in Argentina. Furthermore, British imperialism and the United Kingdom's participation in two World Wars reduced the importance of the conflict within British society, therefore reducing its presence and representation in contemporary society.

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INTRODUCTION

Most people have a national identity, which is defined as a sense of belonging to or associating with a certain nation. This identification influences one's position in the world. While nationality is bureaucratic and can be quantified (i.e. through the possession of a passport), national identity is experiential and can be influenced and reproduced in a variety of ways. National identity is typically inconspicuous in daily life, but it is often brought to the forefront following events such as national elections, international sporting tournaments, natural disasters, and international conflicts, as well as when traveling and interacting with others who possess different identities.

International conflicts, especially those of a territorial nature such as the Falkland Islands/Malvinas War, are especially likely to increase one's awareness of their national identity by drawing attention to the notion of the motherland. The 1982 Falkland Islands War, as it is called in the United Kingdom, or *la Guerra de las Islas Malvinas* in Argentina, was a 74-day territorial conflict between the U.K. and Argentina over a group of islands located in the Atlantic Ocean, off the coast of Argentina's southern Tierra del Fuego province. The war lasted less than three months and resulted in fewer than 1,000 casualties between both sides but left a mark on the history of both nations (Regan 1982). The question of the sovereignty of the Malvinas is prominent in Argentina, and while walking through the nation's capital, Buenos Aires, it is easy to find reminders of the war in the form of murals, graphics on buses, bumper stickers, and war memorials. In contrast, the Falklands are rarely discussed in the U.K., and British children do not learn about the Falkland War at school (Arias 2017). To understand the extent to which the Falkland Islands/Islands Malvinas War and its representation in the public sphere contribute to national identity within the U.K. and Argentina I asked, **how is the Falklands/Malvinas War represented in the public and private spheres, and how does this representation, or lack thereof, influence**

the national sentiment and the national identity of British and Argentine citizens aged 18-26?

Throughout this paper, I will be referring to the islands as the Falklands/Malvinas. While British people and many western nationals refer to the islands as the Falkland Islands, Argentines and others in Latin America refer to the islands as the *Las Islas Malvinas*. The naming of the islands is a complex topic, and the name used to describe the islands is often seen as a reflection of one's beliefs regarding the question of its sovereignty. Referring to the islands as the Falklands implies that they are a part of the U.K., whereas referring to them as *las Malvinas* denotes them as Argentine. For that reason, this paper will refer to the islands as the Falklands/ Malvinas, listing the different names of the islands in alphabetical order.

BACKGROUND

History of the Islands

The Falklands/Malvinas islands lay 480 kilometers off the coast of Argentina, to the east of the southern Santa Cruz province but north of Tierra del Fuego, the southmost part of the country, and 13,000 kilometers southwest of the United Kingdom (Regan 2013). The Falklands/Malvinas are made up of over 15,000 square kilometers which are divided among the two main islands, referred to as the Eastern Island and Western Island, as well as over 200 smaller islands that surround them (Hoffman and Hoffman 1984). The capital of the islands, Port Stanley/ Puerto Argentino, is the only major settlement and is located on the Eastern Island (Shackleton 1983). The islands were a part of a subcontinent that has been submerged for thousands of years and therefore they are relatively flat, with the highest altitude being around 600m (Lindsey 1983). The geological history of the land makes the presence of hydrocarbons likely and although none have

been found yet, their potential presence has led to an increase in hostility between Argentina and the U.K. in recent years (Espinola 1985).

The Falklands/Malvinas are believed to have been discovered in 1493 during the Spanish conquest of the Americas, although the British narrative claims they were first recorded by John Davis in 1592 (Espinola 1985; Our History). The islands are unique among European conquest destinations as they had no indigenous population; they were not occupied before the establishment of a French settlement in 1764 (Royle 1985). From the European discovery of the islands until the early 19th century the islands were primarily under Spanish governance, although they changed hands between the Spanish, French, and English numerous times (Shackleton 1983). The Falklands/Malvinas were ruled by the Spanish governor of Buenos Aires until the Argentine War of Independence of 1810. Following its independence in 1816, Argentina began administrating the islands in 1820 (Regan 2013).

When Argentine governance of the islands began, the islands were unoccupied plots of land that Argentina believed it had inherited from the Spanish. As the Argentine government had no particular interest in the islands, a cattle owner and German-born businessman who were owed money by the government were offered the right to use land in the East Falklands for agriculture and cattle in exchange for their debt (Cawkell 1983). Luis Vernet, the businessman, created strong cattle, meat, and wool industries, and due to his business's success, he requested permission from both the Argentine government and the British representative in Buenos Aires to start an Argentine colony in the East Falklands (Cawkell 1983). Complying with his request, and to ensure that Argentine rules were upheld, the government appointed him governor of the islands (Hoffman and Hoffman 1984).

In 1831, the Falklands/Malvinas were brought to the attention of the international community when Vernet prohibited foreigners from fishing and hunting marine species around the islands. Vernet, with the power given to him by the government of Buenos Aires, seized and captured two American sealer vessels, releasing one and sending the other to face trial in Buenos Aires. In response, the American government raided the settlement at Puerto Soledad resulting in the departure of the western island's Argentine residents (Hoffman and Hoffman 1984). Due to America's hostility, Vernet was removed from his position as governor. A new Argentine governor was appointed in 1832 but was murdered shortly after. The lack of an official Argentine representative made the violent seizure of the islands by the British in 1833 easier (Shackleton 1982). In part, the British seizure was motivated by fears that the U.S. would attempt to annex the islands following the sealer controversy (Hoffman and Hoffman 1984). The islands have since been under British control, except for the 10-week period of the Falklands/ Malvinas War.

Between 1833 and 1842, much of the population of the islands consisted of British government officials and their families. In 1841, the islands gained the status of a colony. The British crown attempted to use the islands' remote location to promote trade industries and with that increase the population of the islands. In 1870, with approximately 700 residents on the islands, the economic focus shifted to agriculture. From then until 1982, the Falklands/Malvinas were self-sufficient, sustaining themselves economically through the wool industry, growing their crops, and raising cattle for exportation and consumption (Royle 1985). At that period, the Falkland Islands Company— a smaller version of the East India Company— also dominated the political sphere of the islands (Hoffman and Hoffman 1984).

Argentine Junta Under Pressure

Since the British takeover of 1833, Argentina has expressed its discontent with the British rule over the Falklands/Malvinas and claimed that based on the history of the islands, they belong to its sovereign territory (Lindsey 1983). In 1947, the islands were put on the United Nations' list of *Non-Self-Governing Territories*, and in 1964, the UN General Assembly passed resolution 2065 (XX), requesting formal negotiations between Argentina and the U.K. regarding the sovereignty of the islands involving the Special Committee on Decolonization (General Assembly 1964). The negotiations increased the importance of the islands to the Argentine public by bringing attention to the land lost to colonizing powers. This view united Argentines from across the political spectrum who agreed the Falklands/Malvinas should be Argentine (Gompert et al. 2014). The negotiations continued for decades and included 16 unsuccessful bilateral talks (Freedman and Gamba-Stonehouse 1991; Segade 2011). In 1980, there was a glimpse of hope when the U.K. considered setting a lease agreement for 25 to 99 years. However, the offer was reneged due to the objection of Falkland residents (Britain and the Falklands Crisis 1982; Regan 2013).

Ultimately, 1982 marked a turning point in Argentina. A new military junta came to power in December of 1981, and the new Argentine President, General Leopoldo Galtieri, sought to improve the economy of the country and increase the popularity of the military regime. Moreover, January 1983 would have marked 150 years of undisturbed British governance in the Falklands/Malvinas, resulting in increased attention towards the ongoing discussions with the UK. Argentina had also recently lost the Beagle Channel to Chile, making the Falklands/Malvinas the country's last hope of establishing a strong presence in the South Atlantic and Arctic (Freedman and Gamba-Stonehouse 1991).

Argentina Invades the Falklands/Malvinas

The immediate precursor to the Argentine invasion of the islands was an incident on the island of South Georgia, a Falklands/Malvinas dependency. In March of 1982, a group of Argentine scrap metal workers working for a private contractor arrived at South Georgia to take down an old research station. The Argentine workers did not obtain the appropriate documents and permissions to step foot on the islands, and a conflict arose between Margaret Thatcher's government, which demanded the men's passports be stamped, and the Argentine government that requested time to produce white papers¹ for the workers. A Falklands stamp in an Argentine passport would represent Argentine recognition of the islands as being foreign land and was, thus, unacceptable to the Argentines (Freedman and Gamba-Stonehouse 1991). While the Argentine government promised the British that they would not support the scrap metal workers, rumors floated that the Argentine Navy was delivering them supplies. According to the British account, there were Argentine marines among the metalworkers who marked their camp with an Argentine flag (Britain and the Falklands Crisis 1982).

The motives behind the Argentine invasion of the Falklands/Malvinas remain unclear. Some speculations include the fast-approaching 150th anniversary of British control of the islands and the South Georgia incident, while others claim the Falklands were used as a diversionary tactic facilitated by the military-minded Galtieri government (Weeks 2014). Argentina declared that it was going to invade the islands while the countries were still at the negotiation table and on the 2nd of April 1982, Argentina mobilized troops, beginning the 74-day Falkland Islands War/ *Guerra de las Islas Malvinas*. The landing of Argentine forces on the islands was symbolic– the forces consisted of less than a thousand lightly armed men who were instructed to minimize casualties

¹ A white paper was an official travel document issued by the government of Argentina that was stamped at the Falklands/Malvinas so that no Argentine passport needed to be stamped (Freedman and Gamba-Stonehouse 1991).

and captured the few Royal Marines on the islands (Gompert et al. 2014). Argentina did not expect the UK to respond to its seizure of the islands, nor did it expect the international community, and particularly the US, to oppose the Argentine occupation. Moreover, since Argentina had close trade relations with the USSR and the Soviets were dependent on Argentina for grain, President Galtieri believed the Soviet Union would veto any resolution against Argentina in the U.N. (Freedman 1982). While the Argentine military was ill-equipped and trained, the British forces consisted of well-fitted warships and highly trained Royal Marines. Argentine forces slowly increased from around one thousand to 20,000 soldiers as British forces began a 20-day naval mobilization to the islands. Due to rough conditions on the ground, armored warfare and airstrikes were hard to engage, leading the forces to fight trench to trench, and making naval forces extremely valuable. While the natural advantage on the islands was in favor of defending forces, the Argentine government did not give its troops the capability to effectively defend the islands (Freedman 1982; Gompert 2014). On June 14th 1982, the Argentine forces surrendered, bringing the conflict to an end. Casualties consisted of about 700 Argentine and 255 British soldiers (Regan 2013).

Falklands/ Malvinas Since the Conflict

Since the conflict, tensions in the region have lessened but are nonetheless still present. Argentina appealed to the UN numerous times, framing the Falklands/Malvinas as a territory that should be decolonized. In 2010, British oil explorations in the waters surrounding the islands led to an increase in tensions (Dodds 2012). As of the writing of this paper, no oil has been found in the Falklands/Malvinas, but if oil is discovered the potential economic gain is likely to bring the issue to the forefront of Argentina's foreign policy.

Another controversial action by the UK was the deployment of Prince William, heir to the throne, to the islands for six weeks in 2012 which fell near the 30th anniversary of the conflict. While the British government stated it was part of standard training, Argentina dubbed it a “provocative act,” especially as William’s uncle, Prince Andrew, fought in the war 30 years prior (Romig 2012; “Prince Andrew” 1982).

The Falklands/ Malvinas conflict has been represented in different ways by both the Argentine and the British media. Most recently, the conflict was featured on the 4th season of Netflix’s *The Crown*, which presented the undocumented Argentine metalworkers in South Georgia as the cause of the war while focusing on Margaret Thatcher’s actions and popular support throughout the conflict. Previously, the conflict was highlighted during a *Top Gear* Patagonia special where the show’s British crew drove around Argentina in a car with a license plate reading “H982 FLK,” referencing the year the war broke out, 1982, and the British name of the islands, Falklands. The crew had to evacuate the country after being chased down and attacked by angry war veterans (Goñi and Tran 2015). Numerous Argentine directors have shot movies centered around the conflict, namely *Los chicos de la Guerra* (the children of the war), which displays the war experiences of three soldiers from different socio-economic backgrounds, and *Iluminados por el fuego* (illuminated by fire) which tells the story of an 18-year-old soldier during the war and highlights the imbalance of power between the two militaries.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the following sections, I first define the key terms nationalism, national identity, and “banal nationalism.” Second, I examine the theoretical framework of this research, which include social identity, structuration, praxeology, and historical materialism. Third, I explore existing literature on the representations of the Falkland Islands/Islas Malvinas and how such

representations influence the national identity of citizens in the U.K. and Argentina. Using existing literature, I display the gap in previous research that I aim to fill and argue that comparing the representations of the Falkland Islands/Malvinas War and their influence on the national identity of British and Argentine nationals will contribute to the understanding of the reproduction of national identity through both banal and blatant reminders.

Nationalism and National Identity

Throughout this paper, nationalism is defined as an ideology that endorses the notion that the world is naturally composed of nation-states in which most people inherently and consciously have a national identity (Billig 1995, 37-38). The ideology of nationalism “make[s] people forget that their world has been historically constructed... as if there could not possibly be a world without nations” (Billig 2005, 184). The belief in nations and national identity reinforces and reproduces nationalism and ensures the continuing existence of nation-states, which are socially constructed (Billig 1995). Consequently, national identity is defined as the individual sense of belonging to a nation and a national community.

In our globalized world, national identity and nationalism became increasingly important. Although national identity is not salient in most situations, one is often reminded of it through their environment (Billig 1995; Billig 2005, 185). While it may be easy to forget about national identity in daily life, national identity can be brought to the forefront through the rivalry between nation-states, or ‘us vs them’ narrative (Billig 2005). This narrative gains prominence during international sporting tournaments such as the FIFA World Cup and Olympic Games, as well as through past and present conflicts such as those between Argentina and the U.K. or Pakistan and India. These

instances are described by Michael Billig and Anthony Giddens as instances of “hot nationalism” (Billig 1991; Giddens 1987: 178).

Banal Nationalism

Michael Billig coined the term *banal nationalism* to refer to the subtle reminders of national identity present in individuals’ day-to-day lives that typically go unnoticed (Benwell and Dodds 2014, 51; Billig 2005). Billig (1995) uses the notion of waved (recognizable) vs unwaved (banal) flags to refer to forms of nationalist expression such as stamps, banknotes, textbooks, maps, memorials, etc. While a national flag may symbolize freedom and independence, it can also carry different meanings. For example, a flag at half-mast can represent grieving. Waved flags are flags that are recognized for their symbolization of nationhood (Billig 1995). On the other hand, flags in common spaces are not typically interpreted as symbols, making them unwaved flags. Billig gives the example of a photo of a soldier saluting a flag on the cover of a magazine. He discusses how while the soldier sees the waved flag for its meaning and salutes it, people who see the photo will not salute the magazine even though the magazine itself contains the flag. The magazine then is an unwaved flag— it carries a subtle reminder of nationhood in an everyday context without being treated as such (Billig 1995, 38-40). Through both waved and unwaved flags, “we are constantly reminded that we live in nations” (Billig 1995, 93).

The notion of a world of nations is highly dependent on people’s beliefs in the existence of nations. According to Billig (2005), beliefs regarding a nation’s existence are powered by the population's ability to interpret banal symbols of nationalism. Through banal nationalism, Billig (1995) examines how routine representations of nationhood are used to recreate and reproduce nationalism. Jones and Merriman (2009), in their study of bilingual road signs in Wales, call to move away from banal nationalism and instead focus on the blatant, or “hot,” representation of

nationalism. Unlike banal representations of nationalism, hot nationalism refers to symbols that are clearly nationalistic and are likely interpreted as such, for example, the pledge of allegiance. Throughout this paper, both banal and hot nationalism are discussed in relation to reminders and representations of the Falklands/Malvinas conflict.

Theoretical Frameworks

According to Billig (1995) and Benwell and Dodds (2011), banal nationalist representations result in an enhanced national identity and, consequently, a stronger sense of belonging to a national group. Furthermore, the continuing manifestation of national representations in day-to-day life is dependent on individuals who reproduce such structures in society (Billig 1995, 6). Based on these understandings of the relationship between individuals, their society, and nationalism, four different theoretical frameworks are used throughout this research: social identity theory, praxeology, structuration, and historical materialism.

Social identity theory relies on the existence of distinct social categories and examines the way individuals categorize themselves within those pre-existing societal structures. When people view themselves as members of a social group, they have a greater commitment to the group and their fellow members (Stets and Burke 2000). Due to the cohesive identity of social groups, members compare themselves to other groups based on differences and similarities. This leads to the engagement in “social action to forge an image of what the group stands for and how it is represented and viewed by others,” which results in conformity to group norms (Hogg et al. 2004, 253). Notably, social identities are malleable and are influenced by different events and contexts (Hogg et al. 2004).

National identity is a form of social identity shared by groups of people from the same national background. Following the outbreak of the Falkland Islands/Malvinas War, the Argentine and British governments rushed to justify the conflict by appealing to national identity through the image of the motherland. The British Prime Minister at the time, Margaret Thatcher, claimed that the Falklands were an integral part of the U.K. and were reminiscent of the Scottish Highlands or North Yorkshire, sparking a sense of nostalgia among the elite and likely leading them to associate the islands with their beloved land (Williams 2005, 65). Similarly, Argentine President Leopoldo Galtieri declared war to regain support for his oppressive regime through the unification of the Argentine motherland (*la Patria*) and the goal of recuperating “stolen land” (Segade 2011, 78). By appealing to national identity and framing the conflict as a national crusade, these leaders were able to gain popularity and persuade their nations to support the conflict. The group identities created during the conflict have been passed down through the social structure and reproduced to the younger generations.

The theories of praxeology and structuration explore the relationship between the social structure and individual actors. Structuration refers to the process through which individuals are influenced by the structures around them. As interpretations are subjective, structuration examines how structures are altered and further reproduced through the interpretations of individuals. As a result, every time a structure is reproduced, it reenters society in a slightly different form. The two central components of structuration theory are structure and agency. Throughout this paper, I will refer to Giddens’ notion of “structure of signification,” which refers to “rules, scripts, codes, and conventions that govern our interpretations of the world” (Prasad 2017). Structure of signification is applied to cultural codes and conventions which may shape the interpretation of banal and blatant representations of nationalism and lead to the reproduction of such in a variety of ways.

Agency is defined as an individual's ability to act freely and take control of their actions. Structure is initiated, maintained, and reproduced through the actions of individuals. Consequently, agents can resist and transform society by challenging the structure (Prasad 2017, 212). As the experiences of British and Argentine participants are examined to determine how banal and blatant representations of the Islands "reproduces the nationalist narrative," it is important to analyze how actors use their agency to accept, resist, or reproduce the national structure they live in (Billing 1995, 6).

Like structuration, praxeology emphasizes social structures. However, it primarily focuses on cultural influences on social processes, examining how cultural constraints limit agency (Prasad 2017). While both structuration and praxeology are concerned with the relationship between structure and agency, Bourdieu's praxeology differs from Giddens's structuration through its emphasis on cultural struggle which, according to Bourdieu, is central to the creation of society. Bourdieu is primarily concerned with the relationship between cultural dynamics, social struggles, and lived experiences. Praxeology reflects on the links between the symbolic world and power struggles and often takes a more conflict-based approach than does structuration (Prasad 2017). Bourdieu's notion that the symbolic sphere affects society is useful in examining the influence of banal and blatant representations of the war on national identity. His concept of *habitus*, which refers to the deeply embedded societal and cultural aspects that lead actors to initiate and partake in specific social practices, is applied to interviews conducted. Habitus is created over time and therefore does not change overnight. One's habitus is strongly influenced by one's environment and place within society and consequently can create a sense of belonging. For that reason, identifying the habitus of participants in this research helps to understand the formation of national identity through everyday interactions (Prasad 2017). Bourdieu's symbolic world, which reflects

on the deeper meaning of everyday material goods, is applied to the different representations of the Falklands/Malvinas.

Structuralism and praxeology were crafted under the influence of Marx's historical materialism. Historical materialism outlines the differences between socio-economic classes and examines societal arrangements. It is used in this project to understand the differences in the influence of the war on national identities within different socioeconomic classes in Argentina and the U.K. Marx's concept of base, which refers to economic structures and other fixed arrangements such as family and government, is used together with his concept of superstructure, which describes the malleable cultural practices that supplement the base and set different societies apart (Prasad 2017). To examine the superstructure, the concept of ideological state apparatuses developed by Althusser is used. Ideological state apparatuses (ISAs) refer to specialized institutions that exist within the state and operate under the supervision of the state, but whose significance is given by the people. ISAs include the family, the education system, and the legal system among others; they are all institutions that play a big role in the organization of society and that are empowered by the population. Althusser believes that no class can maintain power without exercising control over ISAs, and they are therefore important for the understanding of class conflicts and social structures (Althusser 2006). Historical materialism will be used in this project to complement praxeology's analysis of cultural class struggles, which will build upon ideas presented by social identity theory and structuration regarding how classes and shared identities are formed and recreated.

Military Conflict and National Unity

To understand the representations of the Falkland Islands/Malvinas War in contemporary society, it is helpful to understand how the conflict was presented and received as it was unfolding. In both Argentina and the U.K., the conflict was leveraged by the respective governments to increase popular support and create a unified political front. The ability of the British government to persuade the public to support a war on an island that neither affected the lives of most British people nor influenced the sense of security within the U.K. was remarkable (Norpoth 1987). In April of 1982, before the Falklands War broke, Margaret Thatcher was regarded as the worst Prime Minister in history by 48% of the British population, which similarly believed that the Falkland Islands were not worth going to war for (Billig 1995, 3). A month into the conflict, in May of 1982, 84% of the British population was satisfied with the government's reaction to the issue. The Falklands were used as a means of reassuring the public that "Britain still possessed sterling qualities" and was still a powerful force in the international arena, despite having lost much of its power through the process of decolonization (Billig 1995, 3). Similarly, the Falklands were used by the oppressive Galtieri government in Argentina to distract the population from internal issues such as the struggling economy (Norpoth 1987).

Through the examination of monthly observations² of government support, Norpoth (1987) observed a sudden increase in the popularity of Prime Minister Thatcher in the U.K. during the war, as her popularity jumped from 32% to 53% public support (10-12). Norpoth (1987) acknowledges that the British economy was weak at the time but rules out other factors that could have influenced Thatcher's popularity. As the British did not anticipate victory, the victory may have contributed to this surge in support. Moreover, the unity around the national cause which

² The means through which these observations were collected (i.e. through surveys, observation of newspaper headlines) were not specified in the article.

brought national identity to the forefront of people's interaction may have led to a more favorable view of the ruling party. Given that newspapers and tabloids were some of the primary sources of data through which citizens in the U.K. would have learned about the war in the 1980s, it is beneficial to explore how the war was represented in media outlets.

National Mythmaking

Williams (2005) focuses on several myths used in the United Kingdom and Argentina to explain the conflict. The national identity myth and national renewal myth of the two nations are easily comparable and reveal two distinct perspectives. The British identity myth is deeply rooted in class divides and the idealization of natural beauty and rural scenes, which provide a sense of nostalgia to the elite who used to live lavishly in those areas. "Most media images of the Falklands seen by the public at first were from film footage showing a landscape similar to the Scottish Highlands or North Yorkshire," creating assimilation between the British rural areas and the islands (Williams 2005, 65). When Argentina invaded the islands, the British media played with contrasting images of the Falklands before and after British arrival to the islands, convincing the British people that the land was theirs to reclaim. The settlers of the islands were said to have "a quality of life which was lost in Britain 60 years ago," further associating the island with mainland Britain (Williams 2005, 66). The Falkland national renewal myth claims that by pushing Argentina out of the Falklands, Britain would be reunited and would re-establish its position as a world leader, which it lost during decolonization in the mid-20th century (Williams 2005, 67). The British government justified the war by expressing its influence on national unity and emphasizing the relative power of the U.K. in the global system.

Similarly, the Argentine identity myth claims that Argentina's sense of identity was lost when the Malvinas were first taken over by the British in 1833. The unified sense of national identity following the loss of the Malvinas was especially significant in 1833, as it unified the recent European immigrants who mainly settled in large cities and the *gauchos* of the rural areas who notoriously held very different points of view about the nature of the Argentine nation and government (Williams 2005). Before the 1982 conflict, different social classes held different perceptions of what national identity (in Spanish *ser nacional*, "be national") meant, but the conflict united people across socio-economic classes. The Malvinas national renewal myth is a continuation of the Argentine identity myth, claiming that as national identity was lost with the Malvinas, only the recovery of the Malvinas will restore national identity. The Malvinas are seen as almost sacred as they are a part of the motherland (*la Patria*), which allows the military to characterize it as a crusade. This is what allowed for the outbreak of the war in 1982, when the Malvinas were used to regain national support by President Galtieri's oppressive regime and is perhaps also what led to the Malvinas having such a prominent role in contemporary Argentine society (Segade 2011). Today, the Malvinas are visible throughout Argentine streets, road signs, as well as within the education system.

Education and National Identity

Matthew Benwell (2014) examines the different representations of the Falkland Islands/Malvinas at schools in Port Stanley, the capital of the Falkland Islands, where the British education system is followed, as well as schools in Rio Galleros, the capital of the Santa Cruz province located at the southern tip of Argentina, which follows the Argentine education system. Benwell focuses on regions that were influenced by the conflict directly and are thus more likely

to have representations of it in their classrooms. The examination of both banal and blatant representations of nationalism in schools in Rio Galleros and the Port Stanley allows for a comparative analysis of how Argentina and the U.K. embed the conflict in the public sphere. Before discussing Benwell's research, it is important to note that he is a British researcher who grew up in the U.K. during the time of the conflict; thus, his approach may have been influenced by his experiences. His nationality and the fact that most of his discussions with Argentine educators took place in offices and formal spaces may have influenced the information Argentine interviewees shared with him. Benwell recognizes that conducting interviews in schools and offices may have encouraged educators to reproduce the "official narrative" and not their personal views (2014, 55). While Benwell's research allows for comparison of both education systems, the representations of the islands in the two cities examined are specific to those regions which were directly affected by the war and do not represent how the islands are remembered and portrayed more broadly across the two nations.

Classrooms and the education system as a whole influence how national identity and citizenship are learned and remembered (Benwell 2014, 51). Port Stanley and Rio Galleros incorporate classes about local history and geography into their curriculum. In Port Stanley, classroom lessons about the war are often supported by field trips to significant battle sites. Most residents of Port Stanley have personal memories from the war, and community members are often invited to share their stories and memories of the war, especially on anniversaries such as June 14th, which marks the end of the war. On the 30th anniversary of the war, classes were centered around the conflict for an entire week. Students painted murals in art class, practiced the British Army's fitness test in physical education, and learned about war poetry in English class (Benwell 2014, 54). While the conflict is viewed from the local perspective, students are continuously

reminded of the British sacrifice during the war. This reaffirms the students' identity as not only Falkland citizens, but citizens of the U.K. Promoting a sense of national identity is not the only motive for local education in the Falklands. During an interview with Benwell (2014), a Falkland Island Government official revealed that local education aims to ensure that if confronted with questions from journalists visiting the island, young people can “respond intelligently” (Benwell 2014, 54). The use of the word “intelligently” reveals that there is a certain answer expected from young people when confronted with questions—likely one that reflects the British national narrative.

Although Rio Galleros was only marginally affected by the conflict in comparison to the Falklands themselves, its schools' measures of remembrance and representation of the conflict are comparable to those in Port Stanley. In Rio Galleros, schools are used as a means of teaching young Argentinians about their nation's “legitimate rights” to the Malvinas (Benwell 2014, 54). In Argentina, the nation's right to the Malvinas is expressed banally through national maps, which mark the Islands as a part of the Tierra del Fuego province, and blatantly through national history classes that focus on the islands. Although directly teaching children about the Argentine side of the war is blatant, the fact that classes about the Malvinas are included within the national history curriculum as opposed to world history is a banal means of enforcing the national perspective. The 2nd of April is typically remembered in schools through a ceremony commemorating the beginning of the fight to recuperate the islands. It is interesting to note that while in the Falklands the end of the war is highlighted, in Rio Galleros, the emphasis is placed on its beginning. With the turn of the century, there has been an influx in education material relating to the Malvinas from the *Ministerio de Educación de la Nación Argentina* which impacts not only areas directly affected by the war such as Rio Galleros, but students nation-wide (Benwell 2014). While it seems like the

Argentine educational system engraves the idea of the Malvinas into its citizens from a young age, further research by Benwell and Dodds (2011) shows that once out of the compulsory education system, which ranges from kindergarten to high school, young citizens do not place the Malvinas at the top of their priority list.

Contemporary Views of Argentines

Between 1992 and 2010, Benwell and Dodds conducted research among students of *La Universidad de Buenos Aires* and examined how 20 students aged 18-27 were affected by banal representations of the war (2011, 1). Two of Benwell's and Dodds' interviewees, age 25, expressed that the Malvinas are far removed from their lives and that whether the islands are under Argentine or British control is not an issue they would personally prioritize as the Falklands/Malvinas are simply a symbol of patriotism for them, while issues such as the salaries of professors in public universities influence them directly. Other students were interested in reclaiming the islands due to the islands' economic potential, rather than due to Argentina's inherent right to them. Younger generations seem to care less about the Falklands/Malvinas than do older generations that lived through the war.

Students interviewed by Benwell and Dodds (2011) expressed that even colloquial uses of the conflict, such as the football chant *el que no salta es un ingles* (that who doesn't jump is English), are unappealing to them, with one student saying that he jumps due to the social expectation to act that way and not because he believes being English is an insult (8). These findings were further supported when in 2010, despite a controversy that aroused following a British oil exploration around the Islands, an Argentine opinion poll discovered that 45% of Argentines had "little or no interest in news relating to the Malvinas" and noticed that respondents

between the ages of 18 and 29 were the least likely to express interest in the Malvinas, while men over 50 were most likely to express such interest (Benwell and Dodds 2011, 4).

Benwell's and Dodds' 2011 research is particularly significant as it is the closest existing research to that of this paper. Considering that social structures and identities are dynamic and are constantly influenced by one's interaction with one's surroundings and given that Benwell's and Dodd's research was conducted between 1992 and 2010, there is space for this topic to be revisited. Additionally, the positionality of two British researchers researching this issue in Argentina may have influenced the responses they obtained. The interviewees were aware of the positionality of the researchers, as is evident through the words of a 24-year-old interviewee who referred to the islands as being "theirs, urm, yours," placing the authors on the opposing side (Benwell and Dodds 2011, 8). For that reason, it would be interesting to examine these topics through the lens of a foreigner who has no significant ties to either side of the conflict, which may result in more sincere responses from interviewees.

Limitations of Literature

This research elaborates on existing literature by examining the current banal and blatant representations of the Falklands/Malvinas in the U.K. and Argentine and exploring the influence these have on the national identity of British and Argentine citizens who were born after the conflict. Through the example of the Falklands/Malvinas, this research hopes to shed light on the extent to which national identity is shaped through banal and blatant nationalism. The following research explores mundane representations of nationalism as reported by interviewees and examines how the representations' presence or lack thereof influences nationalist sentiment

concerning the islands, while building on the concepts of banal vs. hot nationalism and keeping in mind what has previously been discovered.

METHODOLOGY

The primary goal of this paper is to examine the relationship between the Falklands/Malvinas War, its representations in the public and private sphere, and its influence on the national identity of British and Argentine citizens. The relationship was explored through semi-structured interviews with citizens of Argentina and the U.K; interviews were then coded for relevant themes. National identity, which is defined as a sense of belonging to or associating with a certain nation, was examined through three indicators: social cohesion, patriotism, and national sentiment. Social cohesion, the sense of unity and uniformity within a group, was determined through the use of terms such as *us* and *we* when referring to a country's population or decision-making process, discussing social structure, and in instances where an interviewee mentioned the term social cohesion directly. Patriotism, defined as one's admiration of their nation, was gauged through interviewees' use, or lack thereof, of words such as "pride" as well as more nuanced positive sentiments when talking about Argentina and the U.K. Similarly, national sentiment, which I define as feelings and opinions about one's country or government, was gauged through interviewees' use of terms such as "nonsense", "domination", and "innocence," which, along with tone, were expressions of positive or negative opinions on the government.

Data Collection

To collect information on the national identities of citizens in relation to the Falklands/Malvinas war and to understand how representations of the war influence participants' sentiment

towards their nation and community, I conducted interviews with Argentine and British citizens between the ages of 22 and 26. I conducted 13 interviews between January and March of 2021, of which eight were with British citizens and five with Argentines. Of the eight interviews with British citizens, five are used in this paper; of these, three are with women and two are with men. All but one of the British interviewees are from London, and all have obtained their high school diploma with some currently pursuing bachelor's degrees. British participants were recruited through a global Facebook group of Jewish university-age students, and all self-identify as Jewish. All five interviews conducted with Argentine citizens— four with men and one with a woman were utilized in this paper. Four of the Argentine participants are friends of mine, and all are from the Buenos Aires Province. All participants had some college education, and four have obtained their bachelor's degrees.

Interviews were conducted over Zoom primarily due to the different geographic locations of myself and the interviewees. The Covid-19 pandemic eased the online interviewing process as participants were all accustomed and comfortable with Zoom; this contributed to the interviews being dynamic with a natural flow of conversation and little to no technical difficulties. Interviews ranged in duration from 12 to 62 minutes, depending on the interviewees' experience surrounding the topic. To accommodate for the different languages spoken by the participants, interviews were conducted in both English and Spanish. Interview questions were translated from English to Spanish using the method of back translation, but the Spanish questions were only used in one interview (Bernard 2011). Only one of the five interviews with Argentine participants was conducted fully in Spanish; two were conducted fully in English and two were a bilingual conversation, where I asked questions and responded in English while the interviewees spoke back in Spanish.

Data Analysis

After interviews were conducted, grounded theory was used to organize and code the data. All eight interviews were recorded and transcribed. Transcriptions were coded for reoccurring themes and exemplar quotes for each category were highlighted and extracted (Bernard 2011). These coded categories, which were crossed-examined for significant relationships through the theoretical frameworks of structuration, praxeology, historical materialism, and social identity theory, were applied to draw conclusions and formulate concrete findings. Simultaneously, hermeneutics analysis was used to examine how interviewees stated their thoughts and feelings about the topic and to gain a better understanding of which statements fall into specific categories. Similarly, discourse analysis was used to better understand the sentiments and feelings of people about the topic of the war.

POSITIONALITY AND REFLEXIVITY:

My positionality as a researcher may have influenced my perspective of the presence of the Falklands/ Malvinas war in daily discourse as well as the responses I received from participants. I chose to conduct my research on the Falklands/Malvinas War following a semester spent abroad in Buenos Aires, where I was able to see the prevalence of the conflict in the public sphere. While I have spent 4 months in Buenos Aires, I have never been to London or the U.K. Thus, my personal experience with representations of the Falklands/Malvinas in Buenos Aires may have altered my processing of the data.

Additionally, As I am not an Argentine or a British citizen, I believe that the responses I received may be more accurate than those of previous researchers on similar topics who were British (Benwell and Dodds 2011; Benwell 2014). However, while my outsider's perspective may have probed participants to explain their thoughts and feelings to me in greater detail so I can better

understand their perspective, it is possible that my interviewees' statements were tailored to my positionality as a foreigner. It is likely that if my interviewees were talking to someone with whom they share a national identity, their responses to questions about the topic would have differed.

Additionally, many of my participants wrongly assumed I was American. My own national identity did not come up in every interview, but five of my ten interviewees were surprised to find out that I am not American. Of those five, over half only discovered my nationality as the interview was coming to an end and after they have already answered most of the questions. As the U.S. evokes many connotations and assumptions to citizens of other countries, and as it did have a marginal role in the war and the story of the Falklands/Malvinas, this perception may have influenced the responses I obtained.

While reaching out to interviewees, I refrained from telling them what my research was about as I wanted to assess their acquired knowledge about the Falklands/Malvinas and their authentic observations about the presence and influence of representations of the war on society without them having time to look up information or actively search for representations of the war in their everyday life. This was true for all but one of my interviews; when reaching out to the Argentine great-grandson of Luis Vernet, I explained that I received his contact from a mutual friend who mentioned his connection to the Falklands/Malvinas. To maintain the integrity of my study, when contacting this interviewee, I refrained from mentioning national identity or my focus on representations of the war. The method of recruiting participants without telling them the topic of my research is my primary ethical concern in this research, as my interviewees were not given the time to prepare before discussing this topic which may be sensitive for some. Interviewees knew that we will be discussing the significance of a historical event, but nothing more. To minimize the influence of this method on the comfort of my interviewees, I introduced the topic to them

immediately as the interview began and asked for their consent and interest in continuing the interview before going over the consent form with them. None of my participants expressed discomfort, and all consented to the interview upon learning we will be talking about the Falklands/Malvinas.

LIMITATIONS:

While this project may present a fragment of the relationship between the conflict, its representations, and national identity, it has limitations. Firstly, the demographics reached in this research were very specific; participants were a part of a very specific age group, and due to my methods of reaching out to participants, participants in each country had many shared identities—such as religious belief and educational background. All participants from the U.K. identified as Jewish and four of the five Argentine participants studied at the same university. There were also differences and imbalances between the demographics of interviewees on the two sides. Most of the British participants were women, whereas the majority of Argentine participants were men. While I believe that gender may not play a significant role in one's exposure to representations of the Falklands/Malvinas, this potential bias should be considered. Two of the Argentine interviewees had familial connections to the conflict, while none of the British interviewees knew anyone who has fought in the war. Moreover, as I focused primarily on the capitals of the two countries where the house of government sits, the findings may not be applicable for other cities or areas where government influence may not be as strong. Furthermore, as data in this research came from interviews, it is only valid if interviewees were being truthful. While I attempted to cross-check historical references with published historical accounts, it is not my place to invalidate the feelings and opinions of my participants. All feelings and opinions were accepted as true and treated as such throughout the analysis.

Lastly, the timeframe under which this project had to be completed did not allow me to conduct more interviews. Through more interviews, I could have interviewed individuals of a wider demographic, conducted archival research, and compared public school syllabi in the two countries. Resources were also a limitation; if travel was plausible and funding was available, I would have loved to conduct field research and in-person interviews in the two countries.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Presence of the Islands and Conflict in Everyday Life

The Falklands/Malvinas Islands and War are present in Argentine society, both through the education system and in everyday life, but are absent in the education system and public sphere in the U.K. All five Argentine interviewees were familiar with the Falklands/Malvinas and the 1982 conflict for the sovereignty of the islands. All five interviewees learned about the war at in history class, and two participants added that veterans visited their classrooms to share their experience of the war. All Argentine participants were well versed in content surrounding the war, although two of them cited some historically inaccurate information. Of the British interviewees, two had never heard of the Falklands/Malvinas Islands or conflict, and only one participant explicitly remembered learning about it in an elective history class in high school. Three British participants remembered previously hearing about the conflict, and all cited at least some information that was historically inaccurate. All five of the British participants acknowledged they have no recollection of seeing any reminders of the Falklands/Malvinas Islands or Conflict around London or in the U.K. more generally. A couple of interviewees mentioned they do not believe there is a memorial for the Falklands/ Malvinas War in London; they explained that most war memorials in London commemorate the First and Second World Wars. Two interviewees mentioned that the only time they recall hearing about the war was through an episode of the British automobile TV show *Top*

Gear, during which the hosts of the show had to flee Patagonia after aggravating Argentine Falklands/ Malvinas war veterans. Another interviewee, who did not remember learning about the war in school, mentioned that he recently watched the 4th season of the British Netflix show *The Crown*, which included some references to the conflict with a particular emphasis on its importance to British politics. This interviewee reproduced the story shown in the show, which is historically inaccurate, when asked about the history of the conflict.

On the contrary, Argentine interviewees, who were largely from the greater Buenos Aires area, all acknowledged that the Falklands/Malvinas conflict is a topic they come across regularly. Most interviewees noted that the majority of the representations of the islands and the conflict are informal; while walking or driving around Buenos Aires, participants said they observe graffiti and bumper stickers which often carry opinionated statements about the Argentine right to the Islands.³ Additionally, in most kiosks and some train stations, vendors sell Malvinas pins. Market and street vendors sell shirts, tank tops, sweatshirts, and flags with the image of the islands and the caption *Las Malvinas son Argentinas* (The Malvinas are Argentine).⁴ Interviewees mentioned the presence of the islands in Argentine literature, theater, and art, and revealed that there are many women in Argentina named Malvina after the islands. Despite the participants recognizing that the war is present around them, most of the representations they referenced are banal; while they acknowledge their presence, for the most part my interviewees were not reminded of the Falklands/Malvinas War when they encountered them as they have become a part of their everyday life (Billig 1995).

An interesting insight by an Argentine interviewee, a 26-year-old man who played football competitively, revealed the presence of the Falklands/ Malvinas War in the world of football. In

³ See Appendix A for images of Falklands/ Malvinas representations.

⁴ Author's translation.

his experience, the Falklands/ Malvinas most often came up in the football atmosphere. When one's team is an underdog on the field yet tries to maintain high spirits:

“It is an Argentine commentary to say, “with him I will go to the Malvinas,” [*con el voy a las Malvinas*] like to say, I will go with a numerical disadvantage and let's fight... to be proud of this type of person that, like that with the clothes they have goes to fight against a person that is prepared and has a team that has impressive logistics”⁵

This draws a parallel between a football team that may be under-prepared or facing a significantly stronger opponent and the readiness of the Argentine military leading up to the war. The presence of the Falklands/ Malvinas in the world of football is interesting as football has great importance in Argentine identity, both on the domestic level and international level.⁶ Throughout my research, numerous interviewees brought up the importance of Maradona's *Hand of God* goal during the 1986 FIFA World Cup match between the U.K. and Argentina; this moment, four years after the war, served as redemption and an act of long-awaiting revenge for Argentines over the British. I hypothesize that this moment contributed to the integration of the conflict into the football atmosphere. Football and Diego Maradona, who came from an impoverished background and became a world-renowned footballer, play an important role in the establishment of a national cause for people to unite around. The presence of the Falklands/ Malvinas War within the realm of football is significant due to the similar role the two topics play in society. As one participant phrased it, “*nuestras cuestiones identitarias es Malvinas, Maradona. Básicamente*” (our questions of identity are the Malvinas, Maradona. Basically).⁷ The presence of the Falklands/ Malvinas in

⁵ Author's translation. See Appendix B for original.

⁶ The two major football teams in Argentina, Boca Juniors and River Plate, strongly shape the identity of their fans and of the Argentine population at large. While many people support smaller local teams, every person has a side in the Boca-River rivalry. Similarly, the Argentine national football team serves as a point of pride in international tournaments and is often seen as what sets Argentina apart from most other Latin American countries (with Brazil serving as the exception)

⁷ Author's translation.

football is not a discovery; Benwell and Dodd (2011) who conducted a similar study about the influence of the conflict on Argentine youth, mentioned the football chant *el que no salta es un ingles* (he who doesn't jump is English) in their study, and themselves drew attention to the presence of the conflict in the football world.

It was evident throughout my research that the most banal representations of the Falklands/Malvinas War are reproduced by citizens—the “popular collective” as a participant labeled it— and not by the government. However, Argentine interviewees noted that there are streets named Las Islas Malvinas after the islands and that when driving outside big cities and between provinces they sometimes see signs with photos of the Islands and the caption *Las Malvinas son Argentina*, or signs showing the distance to the Islands. Participants noted that there are a handful of monuments commemorating the war in Buenos Aires, as well as a war museum and a football stadium named after the islands. Additionally, the 50-peso bill includes the Falklands/Malvinas islands on it. While these are banal representations of the conflict, there are also blatant references to the Falklands/Malvinas islands in the official discourse. The islands are mentioned in the 1994 revision of the Argentine constitution, which states:

“The recovery of said territories [Falklands/ Malvinas, Sandwich Islands, and South Georgia] and the full exercise of sovereignty, respectful of the way of life of their inhabitants and according to the principles of international law, are a permanent and unrelinquished goal of the Argentine people” (Argentine Constitution, temporary provisions I).

The inclusion of a clause about the Falklands'/ Malvinas' sovereignty in the constitution highlights the importance of the conflict in the national narrative, which influences the creation of a national identity. Placing such a clause in the constitution, which is a document celebrating Argentina's autonomy, serves as a reminder that Argentina is not fully autonomous and that something is missing; one interviewee noted that “*ser argentino*

son las Malvinas. Ser argentino es soberanía,” (to be Argentine is the Falklands/ Malvinas. To be Argentine is sovereignty)⁸ which demonstrates the close relationship between the Argentine national identity and the sovereignty of the islands.

From a theoretical point of view, the theory of structuration could be used to understand the discrepancy between the representation of the Falklands/Malvinas Islands and War in the two countries (Prasad 2017). The representation of the islands in the public sphere and by citizens of the conflict is a direct result of the reproduction and maintenance of the memory of the conflict in society throughout generations. Based on my conversations with both British and Argentine interviewees, I propose several reasons behind this difference. Firstly, as the islands are geographically closer to Argentina the location of the conflict may have influenced mainland Argentina more than it influenced the U.K., creating a stronger basis for the reproduction of the memory. Secondly, many of my interviewees mentioned that Britain has fought two World Wars and came into the Falklands/Malvinas islands with a well-trained and well-equipped military, while the Falklands/ Malvinas was the most significant armed conflict for Argentina in the 20th century, a conflict it entered with an ill-equipped military. Due to the Argentine military's lack of resources, the Argentine public was employed to support the troops; families of soldiers were asked to send family jewels and money to the soldiers and the public was asked to send food and warm clothes. I hypothesize that because of the Argentine public's direct support of the war while it was taking place, the Argentine public had a stronger interest in reproducing reminders of the conflict to remember the sacrifice made by the nation. The U.K., on the other hand, fought greater wars with greater sacrifices, and thus

⁸ Author's translation

there was little interest in remembering a conflict that most of my British interviewees labeled minor and unnecessary.

The concept of state apparatus and ideological state apparatuses (ISA) could also be used to explain the different reproductions and representations of the conflict by looking at the power of the state within the remembrance of the conflict compared to the power of the society. In the U.K. neither the government nor its institutions have vested interest in reproducing reminders of the Falklands War, as it did not greatly affect the British public, British politics, or Britain's position as a global leader. British interviewees suggested several reasons for this lack of interest in the Falklands/ Malvinas; most notably, they linked it back to colonialism and British imperialism, one interviewee stating that "it's hard to keep a track of where these fuckers [the British] have been, they've colonized all over the world."

In Argentina on the other hand, the democratic government that rose to power because of the conflict had a great interest in reminding the public about the costs of the dictatorship. By introducing a clause about the Falklands/ Malvinas to its constitution, the Argentine government made the question of the Islands' sovereignty a matter of the law, encompassing it within the state apparatus. It is the ISAs however that make the conflict so prominent in everyday life; the education ISA, the cultural ISA which encompasses arts and sports, and the family ISA all played an important role in introducing the conflict and its importance to my interviewees. While the government provides the base for the reproduction of Falklands/Malvinas war representations, it is the superstructure that increased the conflict's prominence in the public sphere.

The Role of Social Class in Remembrance

The Falklands/Malvinas War had very different influences on members of different socio-economic classes in Argentina. The imbalanced influence of the war while it was taking place, and the different ways in which it affects different socio-economic classes today call for an examination of the role of social classes in remembering the conflict. Several of my Argentine interviewees outlined that the war influenced individuals from lower socio-economic classes to a greater extent. Interviewee A, a 24-year-old woman whose father is a Malvinas veteran, explained that in the 1980s, when the war broke out, military service was still obligatory for men in Argentina. However, it was only men from lower socio-economic classes who ended up enlisting in the military. Lottery numbers dictated the branch in which a man would serve (Air Force, Army, or Navy), and lottery drawings would take place on national radio. With every enlistment cycle, a portion of eligible men would be drawn in a small group that was exempt from service. This group was largely composed of the society's high socio-economic class, despite the lottery being framed as random and fair. If a member of the upper class had a number that correlated to a specific branch rather than the exclusive exempt group, he generally managed to get a doctor's exception that listed he was not physically fit to serve. During the conflict, this created a big degree of separation between the lower and middle class, whose families were being influenced by the conflict directly through their sons' military service, and the upper class, whose members watched it from the sidelines.

To this day, different social classes hold the war to have different levels of significance; the neighborhood or city in which one lives, their parents' occupation, and their schooling (whether private or public) may all influence the exposure and opinion one has on the issue of the Falklands/Malvinas. Two interviewees from two different backgrounds reflected on this topic and

presented two different points of view. Interviewee A recognized her privileged upbringing and the privileged upbringing of those around her; she linked those socioeconomic privileges to the lack of awareness and interest in the war displayed by her classmates and those around her. She moreover noted that there has always been a difference between the way the rich and the poor are treated in Argentina, which she believes is a part of the reason the war resonated with some groups to a larger extent than others. Despite those differences, the participant noted that the conflict united the Argentine people across socioeconomic classes and differences. Through Social Identity Theory, I hypothesize that the war led to the re-categorization of people within society. Whereas before the war the identity of people in Argentina was heavily defined by their social class, the conflict blurred those boundaries and created a new cohesive social group identity— one based on nationality. The presence of another group with which the new Argentina could contrast itself with, the British, allowed Argentines to strengthen their image and engage in “social action to forge an image of what the group stands for,” the sovereignty of the Falklands/ Malvinas (Hogg et al. 2004, 253). This cohesion also results in stronger conformity to group norms and a blurring of previously prominent identities.

While this cohesion may have been the case in 1980, the current differences in the significance of the Falklands/Malvinas to different groups in Argentina tie back to the separation between socio-economic classes. Interviewee B, a 22-year-old man who currently resides in Buenos Aires but has spent a significant part of his upbringing in Canada, expressed his opinion about the contribution of the Falklands/Malvinas war to national identity by noting that only working-class people care about the conflict. He explained,

“We have an expression here, it’s like, *cabeza de termo*, just like your head is empty, like affirmance it’s just air. And like, those people [who care about the Malvinas] have no like self-identity themselves. They like have nothing to live to.

Like only working-class people like care, even though it affects them, like in absolutely no way shape or form.”

The correlation between the identity of the working class and the dismissal of the importance of the conflict by the interviewee demonstrates the still-existing differences between social classes in relation to the conflict. I suggest that because the conflict influenced the working class to a larger extent while it was taking place, its effects were reproduced to a larger extent within that group. This results in reminders of the conflict being present in the day-to-day life of the working class, where it serves as a pillar of the relationship between social struggles and lived experiences to a greater extent. The Falklands/ Malvinas conflict shaped the habitus of members of the working-class through its direct influence on families and the larger community; the conflict undoubtedly brought the working class together as they supported their sons from the home front by sending them food and valuables.

As the participant’s quote above states, today the war does not have a great effect on everyday lives. However, other interviewees linked its presence and representation in numerous aspects of everyday life as a symbol of Argentine resilience and persistence. I suggest that the representations of the Falklands/Malvinas are present as a reminder of the strength of the working class as it remained strong and united throughout the war. Perhaps it serves as a reminder of the spark of national unity that followed the conflict, as another interviewee phrased it, “it gives us something nationalistic... it’s something bad that happened to the country and I think it does give [us] unity.”

CONCLUSION

Through the examination of everyday representations of the Falkland Islands/ Malvinas War in the U.K. and Argentina and the way those influence the national identity of 18- to 26-year-old citizens, this research found that while the Falklands/ Malvinas conflict influenced Argentine national identity to a large extent, it is not a significant marker of British national identity. The differences in the importance of the conflict to the two national identities were expressed through the presence of contemporary representations in Argentina, and the lack of such in the U.K. In Argentina, reminders of the conflict are largely reproduced by the society– through slogans, art, and football references– and to a lesser extent by the government. In the U.K., there have been a few recent representations of the conflict in television, but the Falklands/ Malvinas are largely absent from societal and governmental discourses. The suggested cause for the significance of the conflict in Argentina is that Argentina has not fought other major wars and was highly divided from a socio-economic perspective before the conflict. The conflict thus gave Argentines from different classes and backgrounds a unique opportunity to unite against a common enemy. Moreover, the conflict marked the shift to democracy in Argentina, which was a pivotal point for the nation and is thus likely to be commemorated. On the contrary, the suggested cause for the minor role the conflict played in British society is the U.K.'s engagement in larger wars, such as the First and Second World Wars, which required larger sacrifices from the nation and provided a cause to unite around before the Falkland Islands/ Malvinas War. Participants also cited British imperialism as a factor that lessened the influence of the war on the U.K., since the conflict neared the period of decolonization during which the U.K. had a military presence all around the globe.

Through the examination of the Falklands/ Malvinas, a recent conflict where each country had different stakes, the variation in the influence a single conflict can have on different

participating nations is explored. This research contributes to the understanding of factors that shape national identity and national unity through its examination of representations and reminders of the conflict in everyday life. Through the criteria presented in this research, it is possible to examine other conflicts and ask how conflicts and wars influence the national identities of citizens in different manners.

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APPENDIX A:

Photos taken by author during her time in Argentina



Sign indicating the distance to the Islands in Argentine Patagonia, on Ruta Nacional 50. Taken December 4, 2019



Sticker portraying the two main islands of the Falklands/ Malvinas on a bus (colectivo) in the Belgrano neighborhood in Buenos Aires Taken December 10, 2019



Section from a political graffiti on Av. Luis Maria Campos, Buenos Aires. Taken October 22, 2019



The Falklands/ Malvinas on a 50 peso banknote, photo taken December 15, 2019

APPENDIX B:

Original text from translation on page 33

“Es un comentario argentino decir ‘con el voy a las Malvinas,’ como diciendo voy en inferioridad numérica y les hago pelea... estar orgulloso de ese tipo de persona que, así con la ropa que tengo voy a pelear contra una persona que esta preparada que tiene un equipamiento y... una logística impresionante”

Interview with author, March 4, 2021.